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ABSTRACT

To evaluate the writing ability of Colorado students, a study collected writing samples from third, sixth, ninth, and eleventh grade students in 127 public school districts and 27 private schools during October 7-11, 1985. Samples were scored in a two-day scoring session using two rating procedures--a general impression of writing characteristics, and an analysis of representative compositions to determine the level of language usage and writing conventions. Results indicated that girls write better than boys at all levels; students in higher grade levels tended to write technically correct papers but lacked the originality and creativity evident in lower grades; scores of ethnically Caucasian students were slightly higher than those of other ethnic groups, and the size or setting of a school district did not consistently indicate a correlation with higher or lower mean scores. (Two tables of data are included, and appendixes consist of: (1) a list of the state writing committee members, writing assessment coordinators, table leaders, and scorers; (2) a list of participating schools; (3) a map of participating schools and school districts; (4) samples of student writing from each grade level tested; (5) six tables of data; and (6) definitions of school district size and setting categories.) (MM)

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THE 1985 COLORADO WRITING ASSESSMENT:

THE RESULTS

CS211172

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1985 COLORADO WRITING ASSESSMENT: THE RESULTS

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July 1986
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1985 Colorado Writing Assessment:
The Results

Executive Summary

In October of 1985, a voluntary assessment of student writing ability in Colorado occurred. Students in grades 3, 6, 9, and 11 in 127 school districts and 27 private schools responded in writing to a given topic.

The writing samples were scored in a two-day scoring session. The following general statements can be made about the writing of Colorado school children:

1. Girls write better than boys at all levels as indicated by consistently higher female scores.

2. There is growth in writing skill from one grade level to another.

3. Students at higher grade levels write well constructed, technically correct papers but the papers lack the originality and creativity evident in lower grade level papers.

4. As writers mature, they leave the conversational "talking" tone of writing and move to a more sophisticated "writing" language indicating an awareness of the difference between spoken and written language.

5. Scores of students in the Caucasian ethnic group were slightly higher than other ethnic groups.

6. The size or setting of a school district does not consistently indicate a correlation with higher or lower mean scores.

Characteristics of student writing at high and low scoring levels have been identified and a number of follow-up activities are planned.

A report detailing teaching strategies to meet the weaknesses identified in the assessment will be available to teachers.

1985 COLORADO WRITING ASSESSMENT: THE RESULTS

An evaluation of the writing ability of Colorado students was recommended by the state English Task Force as a top priority for the Colorado Department of Education. In October of 1985, this evaluation was conducted under the leadership of the Colorado Department of Education English Consultant and the State Writing Committee. Coordinators, table leaders, and scorers participating in the writing assessment are listed in Appendix A.

There were six purposes of the 1985 Colorado Writing Assessment:

1. To focus attention on the importance of developing writing and thinking skills for a literate society.
2. To build business, legislative, and community interest in and awareness of the teaching and testing of writing.
3. To provide information on student writing abilities to business, legislative and community members.
4. To establish a standard against which student writing may be measured.
5. To provide school districts with information about the strengths and weaknesses of student writing.
6. To provide stategies for the improvement of writing, thinking, and communication skills.

This report, the first of three reports concerning the assessment, includes the following:

.GENERAL INFORMATION about the writing ability of Colorado's third, sixth, ninth, and eleventh graders.

.CHARACTERISTICS of student writing at high and low scoring levels.

.MEAN SCORES computed as a result of the assessment.

The second report of the 1985 Colorado Writing Assessment provides teaching strategies based on assessment results.

The third report is a step-by-step instruction booklet for districts wishing to begin a writing assessment program. Specific information concerning topic selection and scoring procedures can be found in the third report.

The Assessment Process

During "The Week Colorado Writes," October 7 through 11, 1985, 127 school districts and 27 private schools took writing samples from their third, sixth, ninth, and eleventh graders. Appendix B contains a list of the participating schools. Appendix C provides a map showing the geographic regions of the state that were represented in the assessment.

Third graders were asked to respond to the following topic:

> Pretend that you are a pair of tennis shoes. You've done all kinds of things with your owner in all kinds of weather. Now you are being picked up again by your owner. Tell what you, as the tennis shoes, think about what's going to happen to you. Tell how you feel about your owner.

Third graders were asked to take a few minutes to plan their stories and to think about what they wanted to include before beginning to write. They were asked to remember to be a pair of tennis shoes, to organize their ideas carefully, and to check for correct sentences, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.

Sixth, ninth and eleventh graders were asked to respond to the following topic:

> An editor recently made the following statement: "It always strikes me as a terrible shame to see young people spending so much of their time staring at the television. If we could unplug all the TV sets in America, our children would grow up to be healthier, better educated and more independent human beings."

> A newspaper wants to print the four best student responses to this statement. Do you agree or disagree with the statement? Write an essay for the newspaper in which you agree or disagree and explain your position.

The sixth, ninth, and eleventh graders were directed to take a few minutes to plan their essays and to be sure to state one position clearly, to give several reasons and examples to make their points, to organize their ideas carefully, to use language and information appropriate for a newspaper article, and to check for correct sentences, punctuation, and spelling.

Sixty teachers representing 56 of the participating districts were chosen to be trained in the scoring procedures. In a two-day scoring session held in the Denver area, 12,600 writing samples were rated. Each scorer read and scored approximately 410 papers in the two-day period. Papers were assigned a score of one through six; six being the highest score. Each paper received a rating from each of two scorers; thus, 25,200 readings occurred during the session.

Two scoring or rating procedures were used. First, following an in-depth training period where sentence structure, content, grammar, spelling, and other writing characteristics were discussed, scorers gave a general impression score of 1 through 6 to each paper. Appendix D contains samples of student writing for each grade level at each scoring level.

Second, after all the papers were scored, a representative sample of papers was carefully analyzed in detail to determine specifically how well and how correctly students used language and the conventions of writing.

A complete description of the scoring process can be found in the third report on the writing assessment which describes the total writing assessment process.

General Information about the Writing of Colorado's 3rd, 6th, 9th, and 11th Graders

The following general statements can be made about the writing of Colorado school children:

1. Girls write better than boys at all levels as indicated by consistently higher female scores.
2. There is growth in writing skill from one grade level to another.
3. Students at higher grade levels write well constructed, technically correct papers but the papers lack the originality and creativity evident in lower grade level papers.
4. As writers mature, they leave the conversational "talking" tone of writing and move to a more sophisticated "writing" language indicating an awareness of the difference between spoken and written language.
5. Scores of students in the Caucasian ethnic group were slightly higher than other ethnic groups.
6. The size or setting of a school district did not consistently indicate a correlation with higher or lower mean scores.

The results from the 1985 Colorado Writing Assessment do show the differences between high and low scoring writers; however, the actual means and distribution of scores should not be considered a state norm.

The schools participating in the 1985 Colorado Writing Assessment did so on a volunteer basis. While the majority of school districts participated (72 percent), a random sample was not

obtained. Appendix E describes the proportion of participating students in various categories by grade and the state enrollment proportions for comparison. The students participating in the writing assessment represented state proportions in sex and ethnic breakdowns, but not in size and setting of the school districts. The scoring sample slightly over represented smaller schools (under 1200 students), rural school districts and outlying cities. See Appendix F for definitions of the size and setting categories.

Each writing sample was scored by two readers, and an average score computed. Analysis was carried out by Jerry Scezney and Jim Hennes, Planning and Evaluation Unit, Colorado Department of Education. The correlation between score one and score two across all papers was about r = .8 indicating there was high agreement between the two scorers for each paper. A frequency distribution of the scores, grouped into low, medium, and high categories, is shown in Table 1. The distribution of each mean score for grades 3 and 11 is shown in Figure 1. The proportion of low scoring papers goes down and the proportion of high scoring papers goes up through the grade levels. Predictably, most students scored in the middle. Figure 1 shows the upward shift of mean scores between grades 3 and 11.

Figure 1

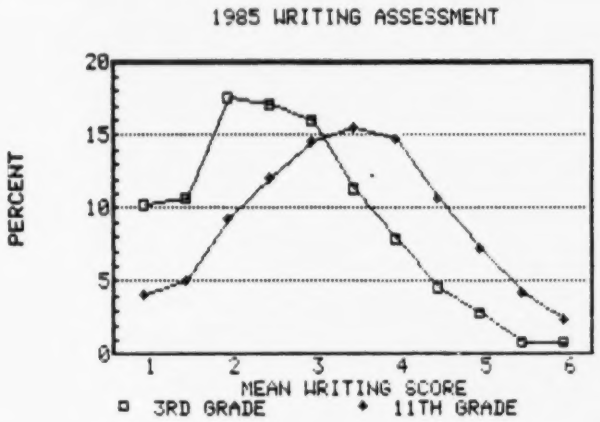

Table 1

Percent of Students Scoring
at Three Writing Assessment Levels

Writing Assessment Score	Grade Level 3	6	9	11
Low (1.0-2.0)	39%	30%	24%	19%
Medium (2.5-4.0)	52%	55%	59%	57%
High (4.5-6.0)	9%	15%	17%	24%

Mean scores from the 1 to 6 point assessment scale were computed by grade level, sex, ethnic group, size of school district and setting of school district. The state mean score by grade was:

STATE MEAN SCORE	
Third Grade	2.6
Sixth Grade	3.0
Ninth Grade	3.1
Eleventh Grade	3.4

Table 2 presents the mean scores for by sex, ethnic group, size of district, and setting of district for the four grade levels tested. Detailed data including the standard deviations are found in Appendix G.

Table 2
1985 Writing Assessment Mean Scores by Subgroup

Group	Number of Students	Grade 3	Grade 6	Grade 9	Grade 11
Number of students	11,719	2,390	2,548	3,609	3,172
State total	11,719	2.7	3.0	3.1	3.4
Sex					
Male	5,744	2.5	2.7	2.9	3.2
Female	5,798	2.9	3.3	3.4	3.6
Ethnic Group					
White	9,141	2.8	3.1	3.2	3.5
Hispanic	1,551	2.3	2.6	2.6	2.8
All other	871	2.5	3.0	2.9	3.2
Size of District					
15,000 and over	2,653	2.5	2.7	3.1	3.4
6001-14,999	2,924	2.8	3.2	3.3	3.5
1,201-6,000	3,089	2.6	2.8	3.0	3.2
601-1,200	673	2.5	3.0	3.0	3.3
301-600	918	2.7	3.0	3.0	3.5
300 or less	805	2.4	3.1	3.0	3.1
Setting of District					
Urban	2,337	2.6	2.9	3.1	3.5
Suburban	3,533	2.9	3.1	3.2	3.3
Outlying City	2,037	2.6	3.0	3.0	3.2
Rural mountains	471	2.8	2.8	3.0	3.4
Rural agricultural	1,749	2.5	3.0	3.0	3.3

Characteristics of Student Writing at High and Low Scoring Levels

Because a six-point scale was used in the 1985 Colorado Writing Assessment, papers receiving a score of "6", "5", or "4" are considered UPPER HALF PAPERS. Papers receiving a score of "3," "2," or "1" are LOWER HALF PAPERS. Generally speaking, at each grade level, writers exhibited the following characteristics:

Writers of UPPER HALF Papers:	Writers of LOWER HALF Papers:
FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS	
.restated the topic in their own words	.simply repeated topic
.established a clear position	.established a position
.developed that position with clear and appropriate details	.did not develop that position with clear and appropriate details
ORGANIZATION	
.showed a clear sense of beginning, middle and end	.had an unclear sense of beginning, middle, and end
.demonstrated careful use of both major and minor details	.jumped back and forth in presentation of ideas
.maintained a clear purpose and focus	.lacked direction/purpose
GRAMMAR AND SENTENCE STRUCTURE	
.used a variety of kinds of sentences	.used little variety in kinds of sentences
.related major and minor points in appropriate ways	.did not distinguish between major and minor points
.related sentences and paragraphs in a logical fashion	.did not relate sentences and paragraphs to one another
.made few errors in grammar	.made few errors in grammar
MECHANICS	
.made few mistakes in spelling, capitalization and punctuation	.made frequent errors in spelling, capitalization, and punctuation
.wrote legibly	.used poor penmanship
.paid careful attention to the overall appearance of the paper	.paid little attention to the overall appearance of the paper
EXPRESSION OF IDEAS	
.presented ideas fluently	.responded in jerky, rambling fashion
.used precise vocabulary	.used imprecise vocabulary
.demonstrated broad knowledge of vocabulary and relationship of vocabulary to topic	.demonstrated limited knowledge of vocabulary appropriate to the topic
VITALITY AND SENSE OF AUDIENCE	
.maintained keen awareness of audience	.displayed limited awareness of audience
.demonstrated enthusiasm for communication with an audience	.showed little enthusiasm for communicating with an audience
.used techniques that attract readers such as insight and understanding, strength of conviction, and humor	.did not use techniques that attract readers .failed to provide any substantial ideas

Follow-up Activities

Several follow-up activities are planned:

...A videotape of the assessment procedures has been produced and will be available to anyone who would like an overall view of the 1985 Colorado Writing Assessment.

...A workshop will be conducted this spring or summer for teachers involved in the scoring process. This workshop will focus on how to develop analytic scales for writing samples.

...A state-wide writing conference is planned for the fall bringing nationally recognized experts to the state.

...Scorers have been trained and are available to work with districts in scoring writing samples and developing writing assessment programs. In addition, scorers have developed and carried out inservice programs within their own districts and have used the scoring techniques learned at the session in their classroom work.

...The Colorado Department of Education is providing technical assistance for districts interested in using the test results to write curriculum, implement school-wide writing programs, and improving instruction in the teaching of writing.

APPENDIX A

1985 COLORADO WRITING ASSESSMENT

State Writing Committee

Mildred Gamble
St. Vrain Valley Schools

Sandra Heartman
Littleton Schools

Jackie Swensson
Thornton High School

Paul Bellin
Greeley Schools

Judy Gilbert
English Consultant
Colorado Department of Education

Assessment Coordinators

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Colorado Department of Education

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Scoring Coordinators

Rexford Brown
Publications Director
Education Commission of the States

Mildred Gamble
On leave
St. Vrain Valley Schools

Advisor

Miles Olson
Department of Education
University of Colorado

Table Leaders

Roxanne LaRue
Longs Peak Junior High School
Longmont

Jim Hobbs
East High School
Denver

Bill McBride
Colorado State University
Ft. Collins

Glenn Gray
Rocky Mountain High School
Ft. Collins

Sandra Heartman
Littleton Public Schools

Paul Bellin
Greeley Public Schools

Sallie Hibbs
Swink High School

Ruth Mitchell
Colorado Springs Schools

Nora Redding
Aurora Central

Judy Phillipe
Englewood High School

Jackie Swensson
Thornton High School

Judith Dean
Berthoud High School

Scorers

Name	School/School District
Eleanor Albo	School District 60, Pueblo
Sandra Almgren	West Grand High School, Kremmling
Lois Bay	Cheraw High School
Philip Bonds	Rangely Middle School
Narcissa Channel	Ruland Junior High, Gunnison
Rose Mary Clark	Calhan High School
Sue Clugston	Aguilar Public Schools
Sandy Conlon	Steamboat Springs High School
Michael Cruth	Summit Junior High, Frisco
Jerry Davis	Durango Senior High School
Jaqueline Dierks	Pueblo West Elementary
Pat Donnelly	Cotton Creek Elementary, Louisville
Jennifer Drotar	Hillcrest Elementary, Northglenn
Patricia Dunn	Alamosa High School

Name	School/School District
Deborah Elam	Lamar High School
Barbara Elliott	Lewis-Palmer Elementary School, Monument
John Elliott	Watson Junior High School, Widefield
Mary Erlenborn	Bennett Middle School
Kay Esterbrook	Center High School
Adrienne Fasse	Burlington Middle School
Esta Fetzer	Platte Valley Elementary
Fran Fischer	St. Mary's Academy High School
Ann Foster	Poudre School District, Ft. Collins
Linda Frazee	South Elementary School, Brighton
Launa Garton	Wray High School
Stephen Ghirardelli	Craig Middle School
Dana Gibson	Crowley Middle School, Ordway
Patsy Graham	Wasson High School, Colorado Springs
Pat Grantier	Ponderosa High School, Parker
Holly Hart	Morey Middle School, Denver
Margaret Hayes	Sterling High School
Mary Lou Helseth	Clear Creek Secondary School, Idaho Springs
Mary Anne Hemmer	Holy Family High School, Grand Judnction
John Hill	Moffat School
Marie Judy	Junior High School, Denver
Willa Mae Kippes	Valley High School, Gilcrest
Shelly Lantz	Brentwood Middle School, Greeley
Eric Larson	Greeley Central High School
Linda Molner	Mapleton High School
Nancy Nixon	Ouray Schools

Name	School/School District
Sheila O'Neill	Florence High School
Mary Padgett	School District 60, Pueblo
Diana Peterson	Berthoud High School
John Platt	Fountain Valley School, Colorado Springs
John Pontius	Heritage High School, Littleton
Steve Powell	Weldon Valley School, Weldona
Dottie Purcell	North Park High School, Walden
Elaine Sanders	Plateau Valley School, Collbran
Elayne Scoofakes	Aspen School District
Diane Snyder	Smoky Hill High School, Aurora
Neil Stamm	Moffat County High School, Craig
Douglas Steinkruger	Rocky Ford High School
Beverly Stewart	Sargent School, Monte Vista
Vicki Stites	Fruita Middle School
Jim Thompson	Akron High School
Doprothy Whitner-Pool	Minturn Middle School
Richard Wolfe	Middle Park High School, Granby
Sharon Ziegler	Paonia High School

APPENDIX B

Participating Schools
1985 Colorado Writing Assessment

Public Schools

Air Academy High School, Co Spgs
Adams County 1
Adams County 12
Aguilar RE-6
Alamosa

Akron
Antonito
Aspen
Aurora
Bayfield High School, Bayfield

Bennett
Big Sandy, Matheson
Briggsdale
Brighton
Brush

Burlington
Byers
Calhan
Campo
Canon City

Center
Cheraw
Cherry Creek
Cheyenne Mountain School
Colorado Springs 11

Cotopaxi Schools
Crowley County
Custer County, Westcliffe
Debeque
Delta

Denver
Dinosaur Elementary
Dolores
Douglas County
Durango

Eads Junior High School
Eagle
Eaton Elementary
Egnar
Ellicott

Elizabeth
Englewood
Falcon
Fleming
Florence

Fountain/Ft. Carson
Fowler
Ft. Lupton
Fruita
Garfield Schools, Parachute

Valley High School, Gilcrest
Gilpin County, Black Hawk
Glenwood Springs
Granby
Gunnison

Harrison Schools, Co. Spgs.
Hayden
Holyoke
Idaho Springs
Julesburg

Karval
Keenesburg
Kim
Kremmling
LaJara

LaJunta
Lake City
Lake County JH, Leadville
Lamar
Las Animas

LaVeta
Limon
Littleton
Lone Star School
Manitou Springs

McClave
Meeker
Miami/Yoder, Rush
Moffat County, Craig
Moffat School, Moffat

Monte Vista
Monument
Naturita
Newcastle
Norwood

Oak Creek
Ouray
Ovid
Pagosa Springs
Peetz

Peyton
Plateau Valley, Collbran
Platte Valley, Kersey
Poudre R1, Ft. Collins
Pueblo 60

Pueblo 70
Rocky Ford
St. Vrain, Longmont
Sanford
Sedgwick

Sheridan
Silverton
Steamboat Springs
Sterling
Strasburg

Summit County, Frisco
Swink
Thompson School District
Vilas
Walden

Walsenburg
Walsh
Weld Central, Keenesburg
Weld County, Greeley
Weldona

Weston:Primero, Weston
Widefield
Wiley
Woodlin
Wray

Private Schools

Colorado Christian Home, Denver
Darren Patterson Christian
  Academy, Buena Vista
Denver Christian School
Fountain Valley School,
  Colorado Springs

Good Shephard Elementary
Hilltop Baptist, Co Spgs
Holy Family, Denver
Holy Family, Grand Junction
Immanual Lutheran, Co Spgs

Jesus Center School, Denver
Lutheran High School, Denver
Machebeuf, Denver
Mackintosh Academy, Denver
John Neumann, Pueblo

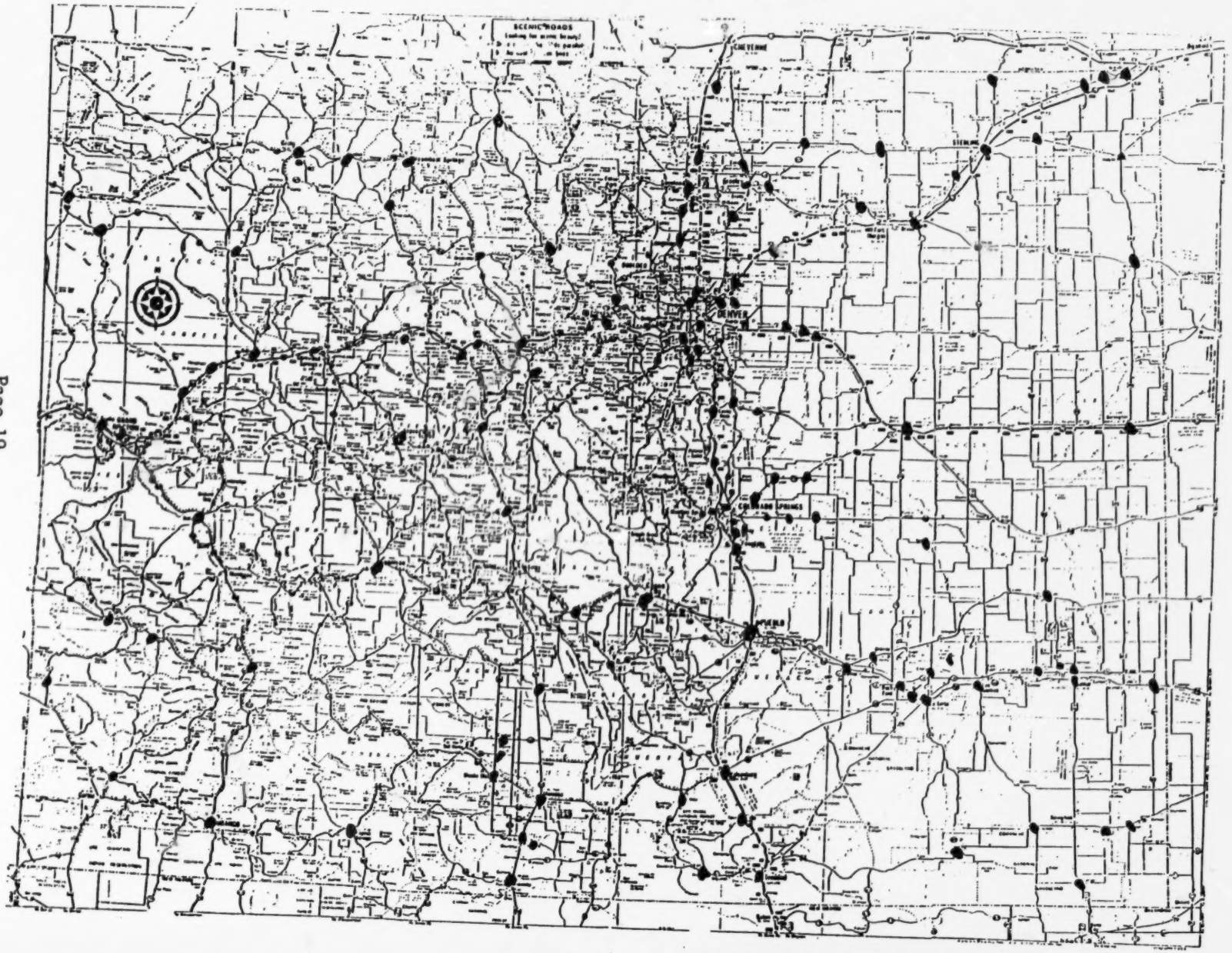
Mullen, Denver
Notre Dame Elementary, Denver
Rocky Mountain Hebrew, Denver
St. James, Denver
St. John's Academy, Denver

St. John's Lutheran
St. Joseph, Ft. Collins
St. Mary's Academy, Englewood
St. Mary's High School, Co Spgs

Seventh Day Adventist, Co Spgs
Silver State Baptist, Denver
Trinidad Catholic

APPENDIX C

PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS/SCHOOL DISTRICTS



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APPENDIX D

Included in this appendix are samples of student writing from each grade level tested.

Each paper is coded with the grade level and the score received by the paper. For example in the code 3-1, "3" indicates the paper was written by a third grade student and "1" indicates a low score of 1.

A full set of writing samples including several papers at each scoring level from each grade level is available from the Colorado Department of Education.

3-1

5304

COLORADO WRITING ASSESSMENT

Your teacher will fill out the spaces at the top. You will not need to write your name on this paper. You will have 30 minutes to write on the topic below. Please use blue or black pen. Erasures, cross-outs, inserts, etc. will not count against you if they are done neatly. Add additional pages if necessary.

Pretend that you are a pair of tennis shoes. You've done all kinds of things with your owner in all kinds of weather. Now you are being picked up again by your owner. Tell what you, as the tennis shoes, think about what's going to happen to you. Tell how you feel about your owner.

Take a few minutes to plan your story. Think about what you want to say before you write. In your story be sure to:

- Remember that you are a pair of tennis shoes.
- Organize your ideas carefully.
- Check that you have correct sentences, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.

I had a dair of tennis shoes that I want on vacation. I want to Jupiter I even went to Louisiana. And to Ohio I had fun on vacation I mit go on vacation a gan. I mit go to California I hop it is fun. good-by

5311

COLORADO WRITING ASSESSMENT

Yo teacher will fill out the spaces at the top. You will not need to write your name on this paper. You will have 30 minutes to write on the topic below. Please use blue or black pen. Erasures, cross-outs, inserts, etc. will not count against you if they are done neatly. Add additional pages if necessary.

Pretend that you are a pair of tennis shoes. You've done all kinds of things with your owner in all kinds of weather. Now you are being picked up again by your owner. Tell what you, as the tennis shoes, think about what's going to happen to you. Tell how you feel about your owner.

Take a ~~few~~ minutes to plan your story. Think about what ~~you~~ want to ~~say~~ before ~~you~~ write. In your story be sure to:

- Remember that you ~~are~~ a pair of tennis shoes.
- Organize your ~~ideas~~ carefully.
- Check that you have correct sentences, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.

Once open a time there were a pair of tennis shoes. One day their owner picked them up and put them on. All of suddon he let out a skream the shoes were to tight. He pulled one off then the other. Then he got in the car and drove to the store. When he got ther he whent to where the shoes wher. There wher some shoes that wher just the right size for him. They wher navey blue and white he took them home and put them away for another day. And then he whent to sleep. The next morning woke up and remembered that he had a socser game. So he got up got socser shirt and shorts on then he put on he tennis shoes they felt so good he was sure he would win this socser game.

The End

3-6

5328

COLORADO WRITING ASSESSMENT

Your teacher will fill out the spaces at the top. You will not need to write your name on this paper. You will have 30 minutes to write on the topic below. Please use blue or black pen. Erasures, cross-outs, inserts, etc. will not count against you if they are done neatly. Add additional pages if necessary.

Pretend that you are a pair of tennis shoes. You've done all kinds of things with your owner in all kinds of weather. Now you are being picked up again by your owner. Tell what you, as the tennis shoes, think about what's going to happen to you. Tell how you feel about your owner.

Take a few minutes to plan your story. Think about what you want to say before you write. In your story be sure to:

- Remember that you are a pair of tennis shoes.
- Organize your ideas carefully.
- Check that you have correct sentences, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.

I am a new pare of tennie shoes. I am very small and I like my owner. Her name is Amy and my name is Sally. She sleeps with me and I like it exept when she lays on me. I hate that. I like my bluesh look. I am tooken to school for gym shoes. I stay tied all day for Amy. I like her when she cleans me and dries me. Sometimes she likes to put me up for a hidding pla for easter so I can get some eggs for the bunny to hide some eggs in me. I like that

6-1

5641

COLORADO WRITING ASSESSMENT

Your teacher will fill out the spaces at the top. You will not need to write your name on this paper. You will have 30 minutes to write on the topic below. Please use blue or black pen. Erasures, cross-outs, inserts, etc will not count against you if they are done neatly. Add additional pages if necessary.

An editor recently made the following statement: "It always strikes me as a terrible shame to see young people spending so much of their time staring at the television. If we could unplug all the TV sets in America, our children would grow up to be healthier, better educated and more independent human beings."

Your newspaper wants to print the four best student responses to this statement. Do you agree or disagree with the statement. Write an essay for the newspaper in which you agree or disagree and explain your position.

Take a few minutes to plan your essay. In your essay be sure to:

- State one position clearly.
- Give several reasons and examples to make your point.
- Organize your ideas carefully.
- Use language and information appropriate for a newspaper article.
- Check that you have correct sentences, punctuation, and spelling.

I disagree because people like television and hear read this: Take one hour of your time and don't watch television do nothing but home work and practices. you may eat lunch and dinner before you do your chores. don't play with friends for an hour or two it might spoil your fun. You disagree but most people have them in their home and they don't want to get rid of them. So don't take the fun out of television

6-4

COLORADO WRITING ASSESSMENT

Your teacher will fill out the spaces at the top. You will not need to write your name on this paper. You will have 30 minutes to write on the topic below. Please use blue or black pen. Erasures, cross-outs, inserts, etc will not count against you if they are done neatly. Add additional pages if necessary.

An editor recently made the following statement: "It always strikes me as a terrible shame to see young people spending so much of their time staring at the television. If we could unplug all the TV sets in America, our children would grow up to be healthier, better educated and more independent human beings."

Your newspaper wants to print the four best student responses to this statement. Do you agree or disagree with the statement. Write an essay for the newspaper in which you agree or disagree and explain your position.

Take a few minutes to plan your essay. In your essay be sure to:

- State one position clearly.
- Give several reasons and examples to make your point.
- Organize your ideas carefully.
- Use language and information appropriate for a newspaper article.
- Check that you have correct sentences, punctuation, and spelling.

I agree with that statement, because if it will make us independent, healthier) it will be better) for the kids. If we would unplug all the televisions the kids would get more exercise and they would get their homework done on time. That is mostly why I agree with that statement.

Some of the shows on tv are not appropriate, because they have to much violence or physical contact between a male and a female. They show to much of the human body in some shows. These shows should not be shown on televisions. I'm sure some other people agree with me especially

parents.

Unplugging all the television sets would help us in almost every way. This help us, because we would spend more time with our family and friends. We would help with chores more, too. Some of us would even read more books and newspapers. These are the reasons I agree with that statement.

6-60

5639

COLORADO WRITING ASSESSMENT

Your teacher will fill out the spaces at the top. You will not need to write your name on this paper. You will have 30 minutes to write on the topic below. Please use blue or black pen. Erasures, cross-outs, inserts, etc will not count against you if they are done neatly. Add additional pages if necessary.

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- Use language and information appropriate for a newspaper article.
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I agree with this statement! If kids read books instead of watching television then everyone under 25 would be an Einstein. No matter how much television you watch you will never gain the knowledge acquired by a few educational books. Even a fantasy book gives you more information than 30 min of television. ~~I don't know what I am talking about~~ I was babysitting a small boy for a day and first we watched television for half an hour. Then I read him a story. After all of this was done he commented, "TV puts pictures in your eyes but a story puts pictures in your head!"

If there were a television program that I had watched for about an hour instead of each book I've read, my brains would have long since been scrambled. Reading books slowly helps your brain. But TV slowly hurts your brain.

TV may have educational programs but you can hardly tell them from educational. I tried watching an educational

program for 9-12 year olds. The people who filmed it must have most 9-12 year olds with rocks in their heads. I had served it when I was six!

You could never get a ~~[illegible]~~ job if you've watched TV all of your life. Of course if you want to work at Mcdonalds all your life, go ahead! But I mean if you want to be something real!

I hope the next generation reads this.

5950

COLORADO WRITING ASSESSMENT

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I agree about unpluging Televisions in america. Students who go to school. and don't get their homework done. And they spend to much time watching television. So they can do well in school. And they stay up late at night doing their homework. Instead of doing it early after School. So their parents won't get after them for not doing their homework right after school. And they can get a better education when they get older. So that is why they want to unplug televisions at night.

7-3

COLORADO WRITING ASSESSMENT

ur teacher will fill out the spaces at the top. You will not need to write your name on this paper. You will have 30 minutes to write on the topic below. Please use blue or black pen. Erasures, cross-outs, inserts, etc will not count against you if they are done neatly. Add additional pages if necessary.

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I disagree that television is bad for America's youth. American television has an educational channel for people. The television, on any channel, can be helpful to find missing persons. Persons watching television, on some stations, can interact and win prizes, or learn to program a computer. Stations have news of the world or state. Television can be cheerful to some person and very entertaining. I do not think television is bad for youth, on the contrary, I think it is very good.

5921

COLORADO WRITING ASSESSMENT

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Bye-Bye TV

If we could unplug all the television sets in America, I think it would benefit all ~~the~~ people who lived here. It would cause us to be healthier, better educated, and more independent.

Unplugging the TV would cause us to somehow miraculously get healthier. We would spend more time outside working, playing, and having a good time. I, personally, don't see anything wrong with that. If we were to turn off the TV, I think we would become physically and mentally fit, if we weren't already. We would come out of our zombie coverings and finally break away.

I believe America's people would become better educated by clicking off the monstrous eye that shows all. People would not only know ~~more about the~~ what's happening in the world, but also know more about the world. You have the empty space that you used to watch TV during to read the newspaper and also get out and learn about the mountains, the ways animals live, and

about other countries eh. you have ever tried to watch TV while doing homework, it just doesn't work. The tube attracts you to it and soon it's nighttime and you still haven't done any homework. eh we were to yank out the TV's tail, eh believe more studing and learning would get done.

The TV goes off and eh bet you we would become more independent. This one-eyed monster has a way of coaxing you into doing things. A couple weeks back eh was watching this commercial for ~~a~~ a hair ~~dryer~~ dresser maker, they made it look so easy, eh bought it. eh turned out not to work. The TV also influences you to join the army, buy a certain life insurance, and even pick a future job like a doctor. However more there is eh don't know, but eh'm sure there are a lot.

All in all eh believe the TV is a bad choice to make. Besides the bad influences, being attached to it till you don't know anything but cops and robbers, and just watching until you don't learn and flunk school there are other reasons to wide to tackle. Also we still have the good old radio left.

COLORADO WRITING ASSESSMENT

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I'm against unpluging all the tv's in america. If you did do that there would be no advertisement, or anything like that. If thayr wasent any advertisement the Companies that advertize on tv. would go out of buisness. There would be no news orgood shows. So I think this is the worst idea there has ever been.

I ~~agr~~ think that some things dont need to be on tv, like the President or junk like that.

COLORADO WRITING ASSESSMENT

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I agree strongly with editor, I believe that if they shuts the television off for one hole month kids would get board with themselves. They would get these home work done earlyer then the usule nine o clock get it done in an hour sitten. Kids would also try to get jobs after school to relay the boardom, and also have more respected for people and family. like if a kid was watching tv one day and his mother askes him to take out the trash the kid would normally say no way im watching tv, but if there was no tv the kid would do it right that instant or soon after. I think the tv is taking over the kids minder, where do you think the kids get most of the stupid pranche to pull on people. TV

from the Customs or leave it to Beaver that kid is always getting into trouble and some of the Branches, these ridiculous tv let little kids see that kind of stuff. I'm not saying I don't watch tv it is around 7:00 to 9:00 at night but first I do all my chores around the house I have a little cousin that lives and breathes tv the kids at his school in the morning he'll watch tv from around 6:30 in the morning till about 8:45 then he goes to school then after school he runs home kicks his shoes off and watches tv from 3:45 till about 10:00 at night. This is a day procedure he keeps up to his mother does not take orders and most of all he does not respected his elders. You can see what they say tv is unhealthy. The Lord and I said what I did was trying to help my little cousin and to show him that television is not all what he's on the earth for. So much anymore television has gone down the drain the shows are lousy and the actors are too. My down with television.

5107

COLORADO WRITING ASSESSMENT

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- Organize your ideas carefully.
- Use language and information appropriate for a newspaper article.
- Check that you have correct sentences, punctuation, and spelling.

Dear Editor,

I feel last Sundays editorial "Unplug America" was way off base. The television has been proven to be one, if not the best, form of education. To say you are ashame to see children spend time watching television is to say you are ashame to see children learn. Granted much of televisions programing is lacking in educational value, but to unplug all the television sets in America is refusing technology. I feel the answer is to change the type of programing seen on television. There is now three cable, network, and satelite a great variety of programing to be offered to a large hungry adience. We the people should take advantage of the advancements in television, not turn our backs to them. Recently a team of doctors studied a group of children and found that ninety percent

of the kids believed everything they saw on television. All that is left now is to provide useful educational programming for the children to watch. Today with the big money involved in commercial television it would be difficult, but if our hearts were really in it it could be accomplished. Yes, truly to unplug television would be a waste. And what about the poor underdeveloped countries in Africa and South America whose one room class rooms use an educational television station as its only means of learning. Should we pull the plug on them? In this age of ever growing illiteracy I think not. Television should expand not end.

11-6

5121

COLORADO WRITING ASSESSMENT

Your teacher will fill out the spaces at the top. You will not need to write your name on this paper. You will have 30 minutes to write on the topic below. Please use blue or black pen. Erasures, cross-outs, inserts, etc will not count against you if they are done neatly. Add additional pages if necessary.

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I disagree strongly with the statement that is printed above. Television is not the cause for America's uneducated teenagers, the cause of the problem is the attitudes that the teenagers have and exhibit.

A teenagers' attitude can affect everything from sleep to relations in the household. Too many teenagers today have negative pessimistic attitudes towards anything that requires any physical or emotional perseverance. Teenagers have attitudes towards schooling that are deeply embedded in their minds. They believe schooling is a waste of time, that they, themselves, will not be attending college so why waste their precious time. The reasons behind these attitudes are multifarious and one, as meager as I, cannot possibly begin to analyze the causes of the attitudes of America.

young people who stare at the television obviously are looking for something they haven't been able to find. In today society it is difficult to fit in with ones peers and kids are often ostracized by the popular peer groups. I believe the children you find worshipping the television are the select few who, additionally, are outcasted by their egotistical classmates and are weakened by the rejection. This sheds light on the issue of independence.

Independence is the strength of your mind. Some children have adjusted satisfactorily to society and are very strong in mind; very independent And then there are others who have been taught to depend upon others for their needs. These people are capable of doing nothing better than depending upon the television for sources of amusement.

For the reasons above, my opinion is very clear; Television is not the cause for the vast problems that America faces, the attitudes that we as Americans have developed are indeed the root of our thornbush.

APPENDIX E

APPENDIX E

PERCENT OF STUDENTS IN VARIOUS CATEGORIES

1985 Writing Sample

Group	1985 Colorado Membership	All Grades	Grade 3	Grade 6	Grade 9	Grade 11
Sex						
Male	51	50	51	51	49	49
Female	49	50	49	49	51	51
Ethnic Group						
White	78	79	78	76	80	81
Hispanic	15	13	15	18	12	10
All other	7	8	7	6	8	9
Size of District						
15,000 and over	59	24	19	17	26	32
6001-14,999	13	27	27	27	29	22
1,201-6,000	19	28	29	31	27	25
601-1,200	4	6	7	8	5	5
301-600	3	8	10	8	7	9
300 or less	2	7	8	9	6	7
Setting of District						
Urban	50	23	24	23	19	27
Suburban	28	35	27	26	45	37
Outlying City	13	20	25	25	17	16
Rural mountainous	3	5	5	7	4	3
Rural agricultural	6	17	19	19	15	17

APPENDIX F

APPENDIX F
DEFINITIONS OF SIZE AND SETTING CATEGORIES

Mean scores were also computed for schools of similar size and setting.

Size is defined as follows:

Category 1 : School districts with 25,000 or more students

Category 2 : School districts with 6001 to 25,000 students

Category 3 : School districts with 1201 to 6,000 students

Category 4 : School districts with 601 to 1200 students

Category 5 : School districts with 301 to 600 students

Category 6 : School districts with 300 or less students

Geographic location is defined as follows:

Category 1 : URBAN - a district is classified as urban if it is located in a high density population center containing 25,000 or more.

Category 2 : SUBURBAN - a district is classified as suburban if it is located in a city with less than 25,000 population and borders an urban center.

Category 3 : OUTLYING CITY - A district is classified as an outlying city if the community exceeds 1,000 people and is surrounded by rural areas or other outlying cities.

Category 4 : RURAL MOUNTAINOUS - A district is classified as rural mountainous if the elevation of the terrain is mountainous and the major activity in the district is mining, ranching and/or winter recreation.

Category 5 : RURAL AGRICULTURAL - A district is classified as rural agricultural if the prime activity within the district is devoted to agriculture regardless of population size.

APPENDIX G

Summary of Mean Scores by Region

Grade 3	Male	Female	Not Reported	Population Mean
Urban	2.37(1.09/254)	2.93(1.09/230)	2.54(1.22/13)	2.63(1.13/497)
Suburban	2.65(1.13/262)	3.14(1.11/303)	2.00(0.00/1)	2.91(1.14/566)
Outlying Cities	2.48(1.06/268)	2.71(1.05/257)	3.50(.500/3)	2.60(1.06/528)
Rural Mountainous	2.64(1.03/49)	2.97(1.04/51)		2.81(1.04/100)
Rural Agricultural	2.30(.988/215)	2.68(1.08/181)		2.47(1.05/397)

Grade 6	Male	Female	Not Reported	Population Mean
Urban	2.66(1.19/268)	3.23(1.18/243)	1.94(.768/9)	2.92(1.22/520)
Suburban	2.86(1.15/269)	3.34(1.20/289)	2.54(.771/14)	3.09(1.19/574)
Outlying Cities	2.67(1.10/287)	3.23(1.15/265)	3.75(.758/6)	2.95(1.16/559)
Rural Mountainous	2.60(1.13/90)	3.10(1.29/67)	3.00(0.00/1)	2.82/1.22/158)
Rural Agricultural	2.74(1.14/209)	3.29(1.13/212)		3.02(1.17/421)

Grade 9	Male	Female	Not Reported	Population Mean
Urban	2.85(1.17/292)	3.40(1.11/301)		3.13(1.17/594)
Suburban	2.99(1.15/671)	3.39(1.10/692)	2.68(.950/20)	3.19(1.14/1385)
Outlying Cities	2.65(1.19/235)	3.30(1.09/285)		3.00(1.18/520)
Rural Mountainous	2.80(1.15/65)	3.27(1.02/49)		3.00(1.12/114)
Rural Agricultural	2.75(1.03/236)	3.19(1.05/217)	3.00(1.15/22)	2.96(1.06/475)

Grade 11	Male	Female	Not Reported	Population Mean
Urban	3.28(1.30/358)	3.67(1.23/364)	3.17(1.04/3)	3.47(1.28/726)
Suburban	3.16(1.24/495)	3.49(1.10/509)	3.75(1.71/4)	3.33(1.18/1008)
Outlying Cities	2.96(1.18/205)	3.39(1.18/223)	3.00(0.00/1)	3.18(1.20/430)
Rural Mountainous	3.32(1.20/48)	3.54(1.08/51)		3.43(1.14/99)
Rural Agricultural	3.06(1.10/209)	3.56(1.04/230)	3.13(1.02/16)	3.31(1.10/456)

The number "2.37(1.09/254)" indicates the mean score, 2.37; the standard deviation, 1.09; and the number of papers used to compute the mean, 254.

Writing Assessment - 1985 Colorado Department of Education

Mean Score Summary by District Size Category

Grade 3	Male	Female	Not Reported	Population Mean
District Size				
15000 and over	2.33(.987/208)	2.73(1.03/220)	3.67(2.02/3)	2.54(1.08/431)
6001-14999	2.58(1.18/322)	3.14(1.09/291)	2.20(.715/10)	2.84(1.17/623)
1201-6000	2.50(1.03/316)	2.78(1.07/351)	3.00(1.00/3)	2.65(1.06/670)
601-1200	2.18(1.00/87)	2.78(1.10/79)	3.50(0.00/1)	2.47(1.09/168)
301-600	2.47(1.02/114)	2.91(1.07/103)		2.68(1.06/217)
300 or less	2.29(1.01/99)	2.49(1.02/74)		2.38(1.02/173)

Grade 6	Male	Female	Not Reported	Population Mean
District Size				
15000 and over	2.49(1.14/214)	3.05(1.12/189)	1.75(.535/8)	2.73(1.16/411)
6001-14999	2.88(1.17/323)	3.45(1.18/327)	2.83(.683/6)	3.16(1.20/660)
1201-6000	2.58(1.10/390)	3.13(1.18/358)	3.50(.707/6)	2.85(1.17/755)
601-1200	2.79(1.07/92)	3.24(1.09/97)	2.65(1.03/10)	3.00(1.10/199)
301-600	2.65(1.11/105)	3.41(1.24/90)		3.00(1.23/195)
300 or less	2.85(1.20/100)	3.26(1.11/107)		3.06(1.17/207)

Writing Assessment - 1985 Colorado Department of Education

Mean Score Summary by District Size Category

Grade 9	Male	Female	Not Reported	Population Mean
District Size				
15000 and over	2.86(1.22/396)	3.26(1.15/466)	2.97(.719/15)	3.08(1.19/878)
6001-14999	3.06(1.15/496)	3.56(1.09/475)	2.25(.822/6)	3.30(1.15/978)
1201-6000	2.74(1.17/439)	3.29(1.09/476)	2.75(2.47/2)	3.02(1.16/918)
601-1200	2.73(.985/77)	3.21(1.01/86)	2.50(0.00/1)	2.98(1.02/164)
301-600	2.71(1.07/133)	3.23(1.08/110)		2.95(1.11/243)
300 or less	2.87(1.06/102)	3.16(1.02/104)	3.02(1.18/21)	3.02(1.06/227)

Grade 11	Male	Female	Not Reported	Population Mean
District Size				
15000 and over	3.23(1.30/462)	3.57(1.21/460)	3.60(1.29/10)	3.40(1.27/933)
6001-14999	3.34(1.24/325)	3.73/1.07/336)	2.75(1.06/2)	3.54(1.17/663)
1201-6000	3.00(1.23/359)	3.36(1.16/384)	2.25(1.06/2)	3.18(1.20/746)
601-1200	3.13(1.09/71)	3.41(1.20/71)		3.27(1.15/142)
301-600	3.20(1.14/112)	3.69(1.02/146)	3.10(.822/5)	3.47(1.09/263)
300 or less	2.87(1.08/96)	3.32(1.02/91)	3.14(1.14/11)	3.09(1.08/198)